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SUBJECT: MALAWI - MUTHARIKA SURPRISES WITH NEW CABINET

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¶1. (U) President Mutharika unveiled a new cabinet that included some surprising changes. Most notable was the move of widely-praised, former Finance Minister Goodall Gondwe to Minister of Local Government and Rural Development. Including Gondwe, Mutharika retained 6 former cabinet ministers, but moved all to different ministries. Mutharika did not reappoint four of his former ministers, despite their reelection to Parliament. All of the new cabinet members are also members of Parliament, defying speculation that Mutharika might appoint professionals from outside the legislative branch to these executive positions. Mutharika maintained 21 government ministries and named 40 members, including deputy ministers, to the cabinet. The President kept the title of Minister of Agriculture, but relinquished the title of Minister of Education. Malawians have commended Mutharika for continuing to be regionally inclusive (50% South, 25% Central, 25% North) and for promoting women into leadership positions with 11 women in the cabinet, the most ever for Malawi.

¶2. (U) The new list of Ministers is as follows:

- ¶1. Minister of Agriculture
President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika
- ¶2. Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Prof. Etta Banda
- ¶3. Minister of Finance
Hon. Ken Kandodo
- ¶4. Minister of Education, Science and Technology
Hon. Dr. George Chaponda
- ¶5. Minister of Development Planning and Cooperation
Hon. Abbie Shaba
- ¶6. Minister of Transport and Public Infrastructure
Hon. Khumbo Kachali
- ¶7. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Hon. Prof. A. Peter Mutharika
- ¶8. Minister of Irrigation and Water Development
Hon. Richie Muheya
- ¶9. Minister of Local Government and Rural Development
Hon. Goodall Gondwe
- ¶10. Minister of Industry and Trade

Hon. Eunice Kazembe

¶11. Minister of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development
Hon. Prof. Peter Mwanza

¶12. Minister of Gender, Child Development and Community
Development
Hon. Patricia Kaliati

¶13. Minister of Tourism, Wildlife, and Culture
Hon. Anna Kachiko

¶14. Minister of Labor
Hon. Yunnus Mussa

¶15. Minister of Youth Development and Sports
Hon. Dr. Lucious Kanyumba

¶16. Minister of Health
Hon. Prof. Moses Chirambo, MD

¶17. Minister of Internal Affairs and Public Security
Hon. Aaron Sangala

¶18. Minister of National Defense
Hon. Sidik Mia

¶19. Minister of Information and Civic Education
Hon. Thotho Leckford Mwanza

¶20. Minister of Natural Resources, Energy, and Environment
Hon. Grain Malunga

¶21. Minister of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly
Hon. Rene Kachere

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¶3. (SBU) Following are brief biographies for key Ministers:

Minister of Foreign Affairs - Prof. Etta Banda is a medical professional and has served as Principal of Malawi's College of Nursing and Mzuzu University. She received her doctorate degree in the U.S. and also studied in Kenya. Banda is the former chairperson for the WHO's Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery.

Minister of Finance - Ken Kandodo is an economist and businessman who most recently served as the head of the Malawi Food Reserve Agency. Kandodo received a bachelor's degree (economics) from Chancellor College in Malawi, a master's degree (finance) from the United Kingdom, and a postgraduate diploma (accounting) from Scotland. Kandodo has worked as an auditor for KPMG in the UK and as a foreign investment advisor in Mozambique. He was also operations manager at Blantyre Print and Packaging, which publishes the largest daily newspaper in Malawi.

Minister of Education, Science, and Technology - Dr. George Chaponda is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Local Government. He retired in 2002 from the UN High Commission on Refugees where he last served as Deputy Regional Director for East and the Horn of Africa. Chaponda received bachelor's (history) and master's (political science) degrees at the University of Delhi and he studied law at the University of Zambia. Dr. Chaponda also has master's and doctorate (law) from Yale University.

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs - Prof. A. Peter Mutharika is the younger brother of President Bingu wa Mutharika. Prof. Mutharika served in the President's previous administration as senior advisor and continues to hold a position as professor of law at Washington University in St. Louis. He has taught at the University of Dar es Salaam, Haile Selassie University in Ethiopia, Rutgers University, and Makerere University in Uganda. He is

considered an expert on international economic law, international law, and comparative constitutional law. Prof. Mutharika has a bachelor's degree (law) from London University and master's and doctorate degrees (law) from Yale University.

Minister of Local Government and Rural Development - Goodall Gondwe is the former Minister of Finance. Prior to returning to Malawi in 2002 to become Chief Economic Advisor to former President Muluzi, Gondwe worked at the African Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, rising to Deputy Director of the Africa Department at the IMF. Gondwe has a bachelor's degree (economics) from the United Kingdom.

Minister of Industry and Trade - Eunice Kazembe is Malawi's former ambassador to Taiwan and was previously chairperson of Press Corporation, the largest conglomerate in Malawi. Kazembe holds a bachelor's degree (commerce) from Carleton University in Ottawa and a master's (business administration) from Indiana University.

Minister of Gender, Child Development, and Community Development - Patricia Kaliati is a former Minister of Information and Civic Education and Minister of Tourism. She was a primary and secondary school teacher before being elected to Parliament.

Minister of Health - Prof. Moses Chirambo was Malawi's first ophthalmologist and established eye clinics in Lilongwe and Blantyre in the 1970s and an ophthalmic training program in 1980. Dr. Chirambo performed his medical residency in Israel.

Minister of National Defense - Sidik Mia is the former Minister of Irrigation and Water Development. Mia was a founding member of Mutharika's Democratic Progressive Party. He has an unspecified Malawian diploma in business and is the Managing Director of a private beef production company.

14. (SBU) Comment: The President has characterized this Cabinet as Malawi's best ever. While some key ministers have extensive credentials, and others appear less experienced in their subject areas, we foresee no problem in maintaining our productive, positive and close working relationships with the GOM.

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